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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **COLORADO NRCS APPROVES MORE THAN \$450,000 IN CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS (CIG)**

*Lakewood, CO* -- The Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service has recently approved seven Conservation Innovation Grants proposals that total more than \$450,000.

These grants will be funded to develop and refine cutting-edge technologies and approaches to help producers maintain viable agricultural operations.

The approved projects address traditional natural resource issues concerning agriculture such as water quantity, grazing lands and forest health, and soil resource management. In addition, these projects also address emerging natural resource issues including energy conservation.

A short narrative on the project proposals are as follows:

- Use of Solar Energy on Center Pivot Irrigation Corners. Energy costs could be used to reduce the cost of running the pivots and extra energy sold to Rural Electric Company for extra income. Will be demonstrated on six different farms.
- Use of Hybrid Sorghum that will produce more ethanol. Market a more efficient and economical bio-base energy crop. If proven it will yield more ethanol for the same energy inputs.
- Develop and test ecological state and transitions model. Will involve producer to get first-hand experience of altering management practices. Will help producers and land managers know what the consequences of applying various types of practices.

## CIG proposals

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- Encourage producers to use the Colorado Agricultural Meteorological Network (Co Ag Met). This network supplies daily crop evapotranspiration (ET) rates and disease forecasting. This information is not currently being widely used. Assist in adopting the technology, usefulness, and reliability of this information.
- Demonstrate the benefits associated with using Kura Clover as a perennial cover crop (living mulch) in conjunction with no-till cropping practices in organic and conventional production systems.
- Project will address irrigation technology such as drip irrigation, Irrigation Water Management (flow rate and scheduling) to reduce runoff, deep percolation, and leaching of salts and nitrate and nitrogen fertilizer application rate with injection through drip and application timing to optimize nitrogen use efficiency and minimize leaching of nitrates into the groundwater.
- Project will use a traveling sprinkler in combination with a HYDROGEL/Zeolite blend to improve emergence and stands as well as yield, quality and returns of onions on a sub-surface drip irrigation system.

As part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service administers CIG, which provides competitive grants to state and local governments, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to promote the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.

Additional information about CIG, including summaries of approved projects, is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig>. A chart for a state listing of CIG projects (pdf) can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/2006awards.html>.

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